



ChemCatBio
Chemical Catalysis for Bioenergy

DEI Minute: Model Minority Myth

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Model Minority Myth: Definition

- The myth that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are universally successful (financially and/or in STEM), hard working, and quiet/compliant/agreeable.
 - Creates a false hierarchy of minorities with AAPI at the top
 - Implies that some minority are “better” than others
 - Results in pitting minority groups against one another
 - “Better” examples are cherry-picked **to avoid addressing issues or improving systems or practices.**

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/what-is-the-model-minority-myth> accessed 10 Nov 2022

<https://pacificasiamuseum.usc.edu/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/debunking-the-model-minority-myth/>
accessed 10 Nov 2022

Model Minority Myth – Harm Caused Within AAPI

- **Turns an incredibly diverse group of people into a monolith**
 - Erases economic struggles of many AAPI
 - “Despite having the highest median income of any racial group, Asian Americans also have the largest income gap of any racial group. . . . Indeed, in New York City, *Asians experience the highest poverty rates of any immigrant group.* The fact that the richest 10th percentile of Asian Americans are earning more than that of any other racial group, however, is enough to render these disparities virtually invisible.”
 - Creates stigma against AAPI seeking financial assistance

<https://thepractice.law.harvard.edu/article/the-model-minority-myth/>

Accessed 10 November 2022

Model Minority Myth – Harm Caused To AAPI

- Distracts from actual status

When asked ***“How well represented do you think Asian Americans are in senior (high-level) positions in the US, with in companies and larger corporations?”***

50% of Americans responded **somewhat or extremely well represented**

In reality, only 6% of executive, senior officer, and manager roles are actually filled by Asian Americans

STAATUS Index 2022 Report. <https://staatus-index.s3.amazonaws.com/STAATUS%20Index%202022%20Report.pdf>

Accessed 10 March 2023.

AAPI/Other People of Color
across 17 National Labs:

- Technical Research Staff: 14.61%
- Senior Leadership: 5.56%

% of US Population (2020
Census): 7%

<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/dec/2020-redistricting-supplementary-tables.html> accessed 10 March 2022

<https://nationallabs.org/staff/diversity> accessed 10 March 2022

Model Minority Myth – Harm Caused To All Minority Groups

- Holding up AAPI as the model minority is a backhanded insult to other minority groups made without consent from AAPI
- “Success” of AAPI used as justification for ignoring systemic problems, allowing them to perpetuate
- “Success” of AAPI used as distraction from learning about historical and current problems

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/what-is-the-model-minority-myth> accessed 10 Nov 2022

<https://www.asianamericanadvocacyfund.org/asians-for-black-lives> accessed 10 Nov 2022

What can we do?

- Question personal assumptions and learn more
- Awareness that groups of people are not monolithic/not normally distributed
- Treat co-workers as individuals instead of group members (regardless of majority or minority status)

Compiled References

- <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/what-is-the-model-minority-myth>
- <https://pacificasiamuseum.usc.edu/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/debunking-the-model-minority-myth/>
- <https://thepractice.law.harvard.edu/article/the-model-minority-myth/>
- <https://staatus-index.s3.amazonaws.com/STAATUS%20Index%202022%20Report.pdf>
- <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/dec/2020-redistricting-supplementary-tables.html>
- <https://nationallabs.org/staff/diversity/>
- <https://www.asianamericanadvocacyfund.org/asians-for-black-lives>